

Education Cabinet

PBS program gives unique perspective of American life

Press Release Date: Tuesday, February 20, 2007

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Imagine being born into a world where you don't have a role model, someone like you to emulate, look up to or strive to be like. For many children who are deaf or hard of hearing, that is their perspective of life.

Recently, Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), gave a presentation on "What it is like to be deaf in today's society" at a public school in western Kentucky. After completing her presentation, a young girl about 9 years old approached Dr. Scoggins, who has been deaf since birth, and asked, "Are you really deaf?" Dr. Scoggins said "yes." The little girl responded, "But you can't be deaf, you're an adult and there are no deaf adults. I've never seen a deaf adult, there is no such thing as a grown up deaf person."

"This little girl's perception was that she would never grow up because she had never met a deaf adult or seen another deaf individual as a role model. She and hundreds of other school children across Kentucky who are deaf or hard of hearing need to feel confident that they can participate and succeed in society," said Dr. Scoggins.

On Wednesday, **March 21, 2007, at 9 p.m.** ET the Public Broadcast Station (PBS) will air a documentary exploring nearly 200 years of deaf life in America. The two-hour film "Through Deaf Eyes" presents American history, family life, education, work and

community from the perspective of deaf and hard of hearing citizens. "Through Deaf Eyes" shows the rich culture and history within the deaf community and promotes discussion on how deaf and hard of hearing individuals can lead independent lives. The film traces the evolution of deaf education from the founding of the first school for the deaf in 1817 to the 1864 charter of Gallaudet University, the only place that deaf or hard of hearing people could earn a college degree in a signing environment, until the late 20th century when the "mainstreaming" movement became popular.

KCDHH, in partnership with Kentucky Educational Television (KET), will host a panel discussion on Saturday, **March 17, 2007, from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.** at the Kentucky Center in Louisville, to open dialogue between individuals in the deaf and hard of hearing community and those who have a vested interest in interacting with the community, such as parents, vendors and service partners. During this event, participants will see excerpts from the film and have an opportunity to ask questions of panel members, including professionals, educators and community leaders.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a deaf or hard of hearing child or family member, or have an interest in working with the community, please join us in Todd Hall at the Kentucky Center, 501 W. Main St., Louisville, on **March 17 at 6 p.m.**

If you would like to know more about this event contact KCDHH at:

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